



Promoting Youth Civic Engagement

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Cover photo: PYCE Peer Network Members prepare for soccer and basketball matches on newly painted courts at MoE Al Sadeeq School for females in Aden.

Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) Program Objectives

The PYCE project is designed to support USAID's objective of increasing Yemen's stability through targeted interventions in vulnerable areas by (1) improving community-based institutions and mechanisms to ensure active participation in governance and locally driven solutions strengthened; and (2) improving access to and the delivery of quality services.

To support this USAID objective, the PYCE project objectives have sought: to strengthen the role of moderate religious actors in positively influencing Yemeni youth, and to establish and support youth sports and recreational programs. In response to changes in Yemen's political and socio-economic context, which has been influenced recently by the Arab Spring that led to the Yemeni Revolution, a new Transitional Government, and an ongoing process of national reconciliation and priority-setting known as the National Dialogue, the language of these objectives has been enhanced. These objectives have been expanded to foster a more diverse set of program components that can accomplish the overarching objectives of USAID in a new Yemen. The enhanced objectives are: 1) strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors; and 2) empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities.

Partners and Beneficiaries

AMIDEAST and its partners Peace Players International (PPI) and the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Endowments and Guidance (MoEG) and Education (MoE), has adopted a technical approach to accomplish these objectives that support strengthening youth participation in their communities via civic engagement.

As a part of this approach, PYCE has galvanized more than 100 community and moderate religious actors known as Steering Committee (SC) Members. SC Members serve as volunteers, who mentor PYCE direct beneficiaries, promote PYCE throughout their communities, and monitor PYCE renovations and other activities. PYCE has also gathered and trained more than 500 youth, the Project's direct beneficiaries, known as Peer Network Members.

PYCE leadership and development training for Peer Network Members has included the Community Engagement (CE) Workshop, Training of Trainers (TOT) Program, and Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program, along with ongoing monitoring and experiential learning opportunities. These activities advance skills in peer-facilitation, community needs assessment, program development, the formation of community teams and leagues, evaluation of participant learning and gathering long-term support for community programs.

These youth, known as Peer Network (PN) members, are expected to identify and train other youth, thereby increasing the impact of the PYCE Program and promoting the sustainability of youth-led and youth-centered activities.

Peer Network Activities

Peer Network activities are implemented as Community Grants and encompass awareness, sports and recreational and community service activities. Awareness sessions are developed to provide life and vocational skills training, as well as personal and character development. Peer Network sport activities are based on the sport-for-development model, which utilizes sport, physical activity and play to achieve development goals in sectors such as education and health.

Community service activities are performed to augment PYCE solar system renovations and upgrades and include clean-ups, maintenance and gardening. The solar systems, in turn, power lights and fans, which prevent otherwise frequent disruptions of activities when power outages occur, thereby enabling the Peer Network to extend activities into the evenings when youth can

become positively engaged.

Solar system renovations also reduce operational costs for youth centers, promote natural resource conservation and serve as an educational tool that supports science and technology curricula. These events directly improve the capacity of youth centers and address critical needs.



Photo 2 (left): PYCE participants lead training in first aid and update basic first aid supplies to MoE Farooq School in Abyan.

For example, PYCE has been keen to support Community Grants whereby PN Members and participants install fire extinguishers and first aid kits. In addition, PYCE has supported repairs to classrooms in public schools and meeting rooms in youth clubs in five governorates.

These interventions may seem ordinary, and indeed, most parents in the United States and many other countries could not imagine sending their children to schools and youth centers without fire extinguishers and first aid kits or to classrooms with broken windows. Moreover, children attending schools and youth centers without drinking water, electricity or suitable play areas would be unthinkable in another context.

Yet, many schools and youth clubs throughout Yemen are in disrepair. Classrooms and corridors have been damaged as a result of reverberations from nearby blasts in times of insecurity, from limited resources to properly maintain facilities, and from the crisis endured by internally displaced persons (IDPs), who have utilized these institutions as temporary living spaces until they could return home safely. As a result, many schools and youth centers remain without doors, windows, clean drinking water, fire extinguishers and other equipment and training to maintain safety standards, promote hygiene and exercise universal precautions.

PYCE has responded to these needs by working with Peer Network Members to install more than 100 fire extinguishers in public schools and youth clubs since the Project was launched, with over 50 fire extinguishers installed in this quarter alone! In addition, Peer Network Members and other volunteers have conducted more than 30 workshops on first aid, extinguishing fires safely and emergency preparedness, with more than 6 workshops in this quarter alone. Fire extinguishers, in particular, help keep children alive in emergencies, safeguard computer and science labs as well as various learning tools and equipment. Further, Peer Network Members have installed water fountains, pipes, tanks and pumps, have replaced windows and doors, and have rehabilitated outdoor play areas and courts at more than 30 sites, with nearly a dozen youth centers in this quarter alone.

All of these activities have been inclusive and youth-centered. Training has included students, club members, parent councils, teachers and school administrators. Further, partnerships have been developed with local and international organizations to increase supplies at youth centers through in-kind donations. To sustain these efforts, the Peer Network's elected leaders, known as Peer Network Activity Council (PNAC) members, have been activated at more than a dozen youth centers. PNAC Members play a key role in maintaining upgrades, establishing relationships with community stakeholders and promoting additional youth activities.

Through these efforts, PYCE is dramatically increasing the capacity of youth centers and raising overall safety standards in order to keep children and youth safe. Indeed, through low-cost equipment and capacity building, PYCE is accomplishing extraordinary milestones throughout Yemen.

Achievements

With strong community support, PYCE has continued activities in the existing governorates of Aden and Lahej and the expansion areas such as the Adeni district of Mansourah and in the governorate of Abyan. Despite the fluid security environment and ongoing social and economic challenges across the country, PYCE has met or exceeded all targets from FY 2013 and met all except 1 program target from FY 2014. The FY 2014 target of 28, for Indicator 2.5: number of youth trained in peer-facilitation through the Training of trainers (TOT) program, was not reached. However, PYCE has trained 20 youth in the TOT this quarter. Pending additional support, PYCE can conduct TOT programming for new Peer Network Members in the fall of 2014. The following is a list of PYCE outputs and tables which illustrate the achievements of program objectives.

PYCE interventions serve to achieve the following:

- a) Groups of volunteer youth and community members established;
- b) Youth activities at youth centers increased;
- c) Youth activities at youth centers diversified.
- d) Youth skills enhanced.
- e) Youth employability and career readiness increased.
- f) Cooperation and support for youth activities among local officials and sponsors increased.
- g) Community members' awareness of and participation in youth activities increased.

Intermediate Result 1: Strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors

Activities	Former Target	FY 2014 Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for Project
No. of Community actors engaged in governorate level meetings	250	100	81	1,634
No. of Steering Committee Meetings	25	10	5	74
No. of Meetings for PYCE participants at youth centers	27	10	5	72
No. of Community Grants awarded to Peer Network Members	18	10	18	91

Intermediate Result 2: Empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs and other community-based engagement activities

Activities	Former Target	FY 2014 Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for Project
No. of youth centers renovated	11	2	2	15
No. of PACA informed teamwork activities completed	50	16	9	127
No. of youth trained as coaches (SAC Program)	50	30	23	159
No. of activated and involved teams that work with PYCE	16	3	2	69
No. of youth trained in peer facilitation (TOT)	48	28	20	112
No. of participants trained by PN	1,350	300	374	6,240
No. of channels of communication by PN	90	0	31	105

Totals are current as of June 30, 2014. However, data collection from field sites is ongoing and totals are subject to change.

Major accomplishments this quarter included the selection and leadership preparation of more than 40 new Peer Network Members, bringing the total number to more than 500! PN Members have internalized their position as role models and active citizens. And, as they build partnerships with local councils, business men and women and local organizations, PN Members are becoming thought leaders on youth issues and are promoting the acceptance of youth voice among the electorate. As their activities and involvement increases, Peer Network Members can internalize their role as youth leaders and become more confident in their ability to promote

positive behaviors, increase access to and quality of services, and contribute to the development of locally driven solutions. They can also re-imagine their neighborhoods as thriving and unified spaces, where they can contribute to a more stable and democratic society.

Photo 3 (right): New Peer Network Members participate in the Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program at Mansoura Stadium in Aden.



PYCE has also increased the capacity of local institutions through major renovations and upgrades at 15 youth centers thus far. This quarter, PYCE supported the renovation of MoYS Gelah Club in Aden and MoYS Bana Club in Abyan. Gelah Club had previously received a small solar unit, which powered outdoor lights for its multi-purpose court. However, this unit was replaced with a new solar system, which powers both the outdoor courtyard and clubhouse. Gelah Club provided the smaller solar light unit to MoYS Intalak Club in Lahej, and Peer Network Members in Lahej installed the unit at the Club, which will be utilized to support educational and awareness activities in the clubhouse. In addition to the new solar system at Gelah Club, PYCE renovated the court and constructed spectator stands for community members and a play area for children. The court will host futsal, volleyball, soccer and basketball games, with additional activities such as tennis in the planning process. Thus, the Club can now host a wider array of youth activities in the day and evening without interruptions from power outages, which have become more frequent in recent months. In Abyan, a key expansion area, PYCE provided Bana Club with a projector, which will be utilized to implement education and awareness workshops.

Five meetings with Steering Committee Members were conducted this quarter and more than 80 community and religious actors were engaged. Five meetings of PYCE participants were also conducted. Graduates of the CE Workshop implemented 9 Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) activities and 23 new Peer Network Members participated in the Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program. Twenty new Peer Network Members also participated in the Training of Trainers (TOT) program, which was conducted in cooperation with existing PYCE partner, NODS, and new PYCE partners, the Faculty of Dentistry and Yemeni Business Club. Peer Network Members implemented 18 Community Grants and other events, which included the training of nearly 400 at-risk youth. With support from 2 new PNAC Member teams in Abyan, Peer Network Members utilized 31 channels of communication to disseminate information about their activities.

Sustainable Development

With a focus upon relationships and sustainability, PYCE staff engaged philanthropists and businessmen, Sheik Abdulla Bugshan and Adnan al Kaf. Sheik Bugshan is Chairman of the Bugshan Group of Companies and Honorary Chairman of the Hadramout Foundation, a youth-focused charity. PYCE staff joined community stakeholders to discuss support for youth activities on June 21, 2014, at the Mercure Hotel in Aden. In addition, on June 22, 2014, PYCE was pleased to host Sheik Bugshan and a delegation of senior officers from the Hadramout Foundation, along with faculty from the University of Aden and local youth leaders at AMIDEAST offices in Aden.

Photo 4 (below): Sheik Abdullah Bugshan, Chairman of the Bugshan Group of Companies and Honorary Chairman of the Hadramout Foundation meet with faculty from Aden University and staff from AMIDEAST, including the Chief of Party of the PYCE Project, Sabrina Faber. The meeting was held at AMIDEAST facilities in Aden and discussions for potential partnerships in support of youth-centered activities were initiated.



PYCE also hosted meetings with Adnan al Kaff, Chairman of AISCO Group of Companies.

With additional outreach to 6 businesses and local associations this quarter, PYCE has held meetings and conducted activities in cooperation with more than 35 partners, including international organizations, local associations, local councils and municipalities, businesswomen and men and local initiatives. These meetings are an important step forward, as PYCE seeks to increase support for youth activities, particularly through cost-sharing and sponsorships. Dialogue has been centered upon educational opportunities, service and volunteerism among youth, as these actors sought to identify areas of cooperation in the coming months.



Gender Inclusion

PYCE has successfully promoted the designation of female-only spaces and increased both the type and number of activities for women and girls at youth centers. These accomplishments stimulated an increase in the number of female youth participants. In addition, some youth centers are hosting workshops for women and girls for the first time, while others have even begun to support and employ female Peer Network Members to help develop their portfolio of activities.

PYCE is committed to the development of female youth leaders. Approximately 40% of all PNAC and PN Members are female. Indeed, out of more than 6,000 youth trained, approximately 50% were female. Female PN Members helped conduct the CE Workshop, SAC Program, and TOT Program in

expansion areas. In addition, they planned and implemented community-based programs centered upon home-based income generation and entrepreneurship. While centers for sport and recreation for women are limited, these activities evidence PYCE successes in the area of gender inclusion and greater local support for women in the public sphere.

PYCE has also continued to promote sports and recreational activities through the sports-for-development model. Soccer, basketball, volleyball and other games have been enjoyed through competitions and events in conjunction with clean-ups, greening activities and art projects. PN Members are also steadily increasing indoor and outdoor recreational activities. For example, chess, track and field events and bicycling competitions were conducted this quarter. These diverse offerings are especially meaningful for persons with special needs and female youth in communities where indoor, low-impact and/or educational games and activities may be preferred. Moreover, PYCE has partnered with Aden's Tennis and Golf associations in order to further diversify and enhance youth recreational opportunities going forward.

Photo 5 (above): A PYCE Peer Network Member receives a medal for her participation in a soccer tournament at MoE Sadeek School in Aden.

Challenges and Opportunities

Ongoing insecurity in Yemen influenced the pace with which activities could be implemented. Protests, roadblocks and acts of civil disobedience at times caused activities to be rescheduled. Economic and social distress from water, power and fuel shortages exacerbated existing frustrations as Yemenis throughout the country struggled to cover the costs of living. As a result, some activities were delayed in order to for staff and PYCE participants to mitigate transportation and other logistical issues.



Photo 6 (right): PYCE Peer Network Member and newly-appointed Vice President of activities at MoYS Mina Club hosts USAID Senior Program Management Advisor Shaif Al-Hamdani and PYCE Chief of Party to discuss scaling-up youth events.

In addition, PYCE had hoped to expand its activities at MoE 14 October School for females in Aden. However, staff turnover has caused activities to be delayed. PYCE staff have engaged with the Ministry of Education and progress has been made.

Moreover, following heightened security alerts, a Yemeni security outpost to protect the Aden TV facilities adjacent to MoYS Mina Club in Aden extended their checkpoint outward toward the entrance of the Club. While the Club has remained open to the public, the expanded checkpoint has discouraged some local residents from participating in activities. Additionally, the Club's soccer field, which is located approximately 3 kilometers from the Club, was damaged in an AQAP attack on a nearby Ministry of Defense installation. The Club is also experiencing changes in personnel, which has constrained the process of dialogue on the issue of the clubhouse entrance. Yet, one of PYCE's Peer Network Members has become an instrumental figure at the Club and is actively maintaining the solar system. Along with other PN Members, he is currently coordinating activities to be held at or near the Club and/or its affiliated spaces. This Peer Network Member had been appointed as activities director for youth and was recently promoted by the MoYS to interim Vice President. In addition, he recently hosted USAID Senior Program Management Advisor Shaif Al Hamdani and PYCE Chief of Party, Sabrina Faber, to discuss PYCE interventions and ways to scale-up youth activities.

Staff turnover limited activities at MoYS Rawdha Club last quarter; however, PYCE has been engaged with ministry officials and interim staff and progress has been made. Indeed, members from both Rawdha and Shamsan Club participated in PYCE Community Grants in June 2014. The Community Grants were centered upon training in fire prevention and emergency preparedness and the installation of safety equipment. These activities were also conducted alongside community service events such as clean-ups and soccer competitions.

PYCE also concluded its activities in Marib. PYCE had hoped to conduct closeout celebrations with PN Members in Juba; however, ongoing political insecurity and attacks on both foreign staff/expatriates as well as employees of other non-governmental organizations led local officials to advise PYCE to forego a ceremony and distribute certificates informally, without any media or promotion. Thus, certificates of appreciation were distributed in May 2014 to Peer Network Members in cooperation with a PYCE partner, the local association known as the Marib Dam Foundation, in Marib City. Peer Network Members in Sana'a attended a ceremony at MoYS Bilquis Club in May 2014 where they received certificates of appreciation in recognition of their contributions and service. Peer Network Members in Sana'a are currently planning ways to enhance youth education and sport activities with minority and disenfranchised groups, such as with the marginalized community known as the *muhamasheen* and with orphans.

Despite these challenges, and in addition to the afore-mentioned accomplishments, the following noteworthy gains have also been made:

- Successful expansion of Peer Network and Steering Committee in Aden and Abyan, alongside increased youth-centered activities in these areas
- PNAC elections
- Life skills and vocational skills promotion
- Widespread coverage of Peer Network activities in the media and via mobile applications
- Training to support career readiness, entrepreneurship and home-based businesses

Upcoming Activities

Photo 7 (below): PYCE Chief of Party Sabrina Faber and Program Officer Waddah Khadder, meet with Peer Network Members in Sana'a to discuss ways to expand youth activities and conduct outreach to at-risk and minority youth. The meeting was conducted at AMIDEAST offices in Sana'a.



PYCE is supporting additional Community Grants and will continue to increase the capacity of youth centers with solar system installations, equipment, and structural enhancements. These and other PYCE upgrades and renovations promote youth centers as safe spaces where youth can feel

connected – an important contribution which has been increasingly recognized among residents in Yemeni neighborhoods. The Peer Network is embracing these accomplishments and has begun to strengthen partnerships with local organizations, participate in broadcasts and media events, and increase educational activities. Upcoming activities include:

- Workshops on safety, emergency preparedness and first aid, alongside the installation of safety equipment
- Coordination between Peer Network Members and the more Local Councils to promote synergies and support the local youth development agenda
- Workshops on soil cultivation, desertification and greening, alongside the installation of rainwater harvesting systems, gardens and green spaces at youth centers and K-12 schools
- Regular Peer Network and Steering Committee Member meetings at youth centers
- Increased youth competitions supported in part, via sponsorships and synergies among stakeholders.